UNDERSTAND

Fifty Memowriter Poems by

David W. Eastham

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MEMOWRITER POEMS

BY

DAVID W. EASTHAM

Understand
by David W. Eastham
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MEMOWRITER POEMS

A rare insight into the thoughts and feelings of an autistic person.

The author, David Eastham, is a 21 year old non-verbal, autistic and apraxic student who attends the M.F. McHugh School's Communication Disorders class situated in Laurentian High School in Ottawa, Ontario. His teacher is Mrs. Sally Borthwick.

One of his poems, "Plow the Happiness" was published last year in the Ontario Council of Teachers of English Anthology, "Souldust and Pearls IV". Another, "Understand" was published in the Ottawa Board of Education newsletter, "The New Mie Cue".

As he cannot write or speak, he produced his poems on Sharp's mini-computer Memowriter EL 7001. In some of his poems, David refers to himself as, "youth".

Before we introduced David to the Memowriter in June 1982 he was pointing to a Word Board for communication.

He is the student whose situation was presented at the 1983 National Conference on Autism in Toronto by his teacher then, Mrs. Wilhelmina Watters and myself under the title, "The Sharp EL 7001 Memowriter as an Augmentative Communication System for Non-Verbal Children".

Anne Grice
Editor

INTRODUCTION

I am delighted that you, the readers of this book, may share the joy and wonder which has come to me watching David's gift of expression develop as he interprets a world that does not always make sense and of which he is not always a part.

It is through his eyes and heart that we may gain insight into this enigmatic disorder.

David has come to speak for those who cannot. We are very privileged to have this opportunity to listen and hopefully .....to understand.

Sally Borthwick
Teacher, M.F. McHugh School
Ottawa, Ontario
May, 1985

UNDERSTAND

I WANT PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND
I KNOW ITS HARD TO DO
I THINK THEY CAN, IF THEY TRY
UNDERSTAND WON'T YOU?

UNDERSTANDING IS SO HARD
I LONG TO SEE IT REAL
I JUST HOPE, REALLY HOPE
IT'S NOT A LOST IDEAL

SALLY

SHE IS NICE
SHE IS KIND
GOOD TEACHER
SALLY MINE

HOME

LOVE PEOPLE AT HOME
WHERE THE LOVE IS FREE
WHERE THE LOVE IS FREE
CAN YOU HOLD THE HEART TOO CLOSE
OR SHOULD YOU SET IT FREE

RAGER

YOU RAGER, NICE MAN
HAPPY FRIEND OF MINE
PATIENT, KIND
TRUST YOU A LOT

YOU

PERSON TRIES
PERSON GOOD
USES ALL
HAS UNDERSTOOD

GOOD PEOPLE
FOR SALLY

HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE TO TAKE CARE OF ME
THEY ARE SO KIND AND SWEET
EVERYONE HELPS
HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE TO LOOK AFTER ME
HAVE EVERYTHING I NEED
EXCEPT SOMEONE TO LOVE

TRUTH HURTS

TRUTH HURTS PEOPLE
YES IT DOES
YES IT DOES
YOU HELP ME TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT
I HAVE SO MUCH TO LEARN
AND SO LITTLE TIME

FOR DAD

I LIKE HAPPY PEOPLE
JUST LIKE MY DAD
HE IS MY FRIEND BY THE WAY
HE IS SO SMART AND I LOVE HIM SO
HE HELPS ME EVERY DAY

TO SAVE DAVID

I NEED SPACE
LOTS OF ICEY
SPACE
YOU UNDERSTAND
FOR ME
IT IS IMPORTANT
YOU CAN SEE
HOME I WANT TO
BE FREE

LONELY

FEEL LONELY
TOO MUCH
YOU LONE TOO

MUST HAVE LOVE
TO NOT
NOT
BE LONELY

POEM FOR LOTS OF PEOPLE

LOTS OF PEOPLE
TO LOVE

LOTS TO LIVE
TROUBLES TO SOME
OTHERS LIFE EASY

REAL WORLD
IS DIFFICULT
TRY HARD
YOU WILL WIN

WORRY

I FEEL YOU,
YOUR WORRY
TRY NOT
TO WORRY
YESTERDAY
IS GONE
TOMORROW WILL
LIFT TROUBLE

POEM FOR LUCK

TEST YOUR LUCK
TRY MANY THINGS
YOU ONLY LIVE
ONCE
TRY TO MEET
MANY PEOPLE
UNDERSTAND
THEIR PROBLEMS
YOU WILL
BE HAPPIER

KINDNESS IS LOVE

LOVE, MY KIND INTELLIGENT FRIEND I LIKE
JUST JUMP INTO MY HEART
NOBODY UNDERSTANDS

A CHRISTMAS POEM
FOR MUM AND DAD

THE SEASON IS RIGHT
THE SKY IS BRIGHT
I LOVE YOU BOTH
IN KINDNESS LIGHT

1 MAN

1 MAN
TIRED OLD

EARNED LOVE
YOUTH WASTED
TAKES LIFE
WORRIED PEOPLE

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND

WILL OLD MAN
DIE TO LIVE

PEOPLE

I LIKE PEOPLE, INTERESTING PEOPLE
I PERSON TOO, YOU SEE
I'M PERSONABLE, KIND AND LOVING
I'M YOUNG TOO, UNUSUAL ME

HELL IS

HELL IS WHEN YOU'RE IGNORED
THIS IS TRUE I SAY
HOPE
YOU UNDERSTAND
YOUR YOUTH HAS GONE AWAY

LONELY

I LONELY
OH SO LONELY
I PERSON
TOO YOUNG,
HOPELESS AND POOR
JUST LET ME SIT
AND MAKE MY DREAMS
UP IN THE CLOUDS
I SOAR

TRY TO HELP YOURSELF

USUALLY I ROAM
FROM HOPE TO HOPE
HOW I WILL BE SOLVED
GOOD PEOPLE SO DON'T HOPE
I ANSWER I RESOLVE

TRY TO BE PATIENT
HOW ELSE WILL I LEARN
GOT TO HAVE SOME FREEDOM
THAT I HAVE EARNED

HYPER PEOPLE

HYPER PEOPLE TRY
TOO HARD,
TRY, CRY, SIGH
I THINK UNLESS
THEY STOP I'LL
DIE, DIE, DIE

YOU ARE SO CALM
YOU UNDERSTAND
YOU WANT ME TO
BE A MAN

GOLDEN MOMENTS

YOU AND I
UNUSUAL PAIR

KEEP PARENTS 69
FEET IN THE AIR

YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL,
FUN

YOU GIVE LOTS OF LOVE
YOU GIVE GENUINE
KINDNESS TO ALL

POOR KIDS

LONELY REJECTS
OF LIFE
JUST A LOT OF
PAIN AND STRIFE

TO TAKE THE BEST
LIFE HAS TO GIVE
YOU MUST DO THIS
TO LIVE

PLOW THE HAPPINESS

LONELY BOY, DO
NOT FEAR
GOD WILL
APPRECIATE WHY
YOU'RE HERE

THE SUN DOES
RISE
THE WIND DOES
BLOW

I LOVE YOU BOY
UNDER THE SKY

PERHAPS YOU'LL
NEVER TALK OR
RUN
BUT YOU'LL SPREAD
JOY AROUND FOR
EVERYONE

USE WHAT GOD HAS
GIVEN YOU
PLOW THE
HAPPINESS
TOO LATE FOR YOU

POEM FOR WATTERS

TELL ME AS ONLY
YOU CAN DO
TELL ME LIKE
YOU USED TO

PLEASE UNDERSTAND
JUST LIFE
HEALS
LONELINESS

YOU KNOW
NOW THAT YOU
LEFT ME
TO GROW

TELL ME FOR
KEEPING IN MY
HEART
EMPTY
A PLACE FOR
YOU

TRACY THE GIRL

TRACY IS BEAUTIFUL
BECAUSE SHE HELPS
AUTISTIC PEOPLE
SHE HELPS SOMEONE
WHO NEEDS HELP
LIKE ME

TEACHERS

THEY ARE AMONG
THE ANGELS
THAT A PERSON
KNOWS

THERE
YOU SEE I'VE BEEN
THERE
TOUCHING EARLY
SOULS

TEACH A PERSON
KINDNESS
YOUR WAY IS BEST
BY FAR
QUESTION YOUR
REASONS
TO HELP A KID
BECOME A STAR

TOUCH

YOUTH REALLY NEEDS
TO BE TOUCHED
THE REASON I DO NOT KNOW
I ONLY FEEL IT IS
PERHAPS
THE QUIETEST FORM
OF GROWTH

IS LONELY

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW LONELY IT IS
I FEEL IT EVERY DAY
I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'VE DONE
JUST HELP ME FIND MY WAY

HAPPY FEELINGS

TODAY I FEEL
HAPPY
TEACH ME JOKE
TEACH ME LOVE
AND GREATNESS
TEACH ME FUN
AND TEACH ME
SOME
OF EVERYTHING
YOU
POSSESS

YOUTH SO SOBER

YOUTH NEED HELP
FROM EVERY SOURCE
HELP US FIND A WAY
SEE OUR NEEDS
HOPE YOU WILL STAY
HELP US FIND A WAY

BE THERE FOR US
GET TO KNOW US
SEE WHO WE ARE

KINDNESS YOU HAVE

JUST I KNOW WHO IS KIND
I SEE INTO YOUR SOUL
UNDERSTAND WHO I AM
WILL MAKE ME WHOLE

HOPING IS NOT IN SIGHT
I HAVE DONE IT TOO
THERE IS ONLY KINDNESS
TO MAKE ME LIKE YOU

TOOLS TO LEARN

I HAVE TOOLS TO USE
TO LEARN TO BE HUMAN
I WATCH PEOPLE
THEY GUIDE MY THOUGHTS
THEY GUIDE MY THOUGHTS
I SEE ROMANCE ON T.V.
I LIKE TO HUG
I AM LEARNING
I AM LEARNING

UPTIGHT

UP APPARATUS
YOUTH'S HEART IS UP
YOUTH TOO WORN, TOO TIRED
BUT ENJOYS LAUGHTER
GO TO
HAPPY SPOT
TO REST AND SMILE

LOVE

THERE
IS
LOVE
GO
INSIDE

I'M
HUMAN
YOUNG
HELP
ME

I
THINK
TOO
MUCH
PITY

YOUTH TOO LOONEY

YOU HOPE I LOVE
I KNOW YOU DO
I'M JUST TOO LOONEY
YOU SEE THAT TOO

IMPOSSIBLE LOONEY
I'LL NEVER BE
A MAN WHO LOVES
GOD PRAY FOR ME

USUALLY

USUALLY I LOVE UNDER YOUNG TREE
TODAY I LOVE PERSON
IMITATING ME

USUALLY I TEACH OVER THE PEPPER
TODAY I TEACH PERSON
WHO IS A LEPER

USUALLY I'M TERRIFIED TO FEEL
TODAY I KNOW MEANING
WHAT IS REAL

A POEM FOR MARK

I'M YOUNG
YOU'RE PERSON TOO LIKEABLE
TOO PERSONABLE
I'M JEALOUS YOU'RE FREE
I'M BOUND BY AUTISM
COULD YOU, WOULD YOU
HELP ME?

I'M OLD
YOU'RE PERSON TOO MARRIABLE
TOO EMPLOYABLE
I'M SORRY I'M NOT
I'M BOUND BY APRAXIA
YOU'RE LUCKY
YOU'RE NOT

MOTHER

GOOD MOTHERS
LIKE YOU
LOVING KIND
JUDGE, YOU

MUM
COULD I
LOVE HOPE TOO

UNDERSTAND
REASON THAT
I LOVE YOU
I LOVE YOU

YOU TRY
TRY
YES, YOU
REALLY DO

PLEASE
LOVE STAY
TRUE

YOUR
EVER OLD
DAVID

FOR ANNE

A FRIEND YOU ARE
YOU TRY EACH HOME TO
FOOL YOUR HEART
I KNOW YOUR SECRET
I KNOW YOUR SECRET
SWEETNESS IS THE ART

KIND, HELP MATE TOO
SWEET YOU ARE
I'M HUMOROUSLY GIVING
YOU PERSON'S JOB

YOU STAY I HOPE
I NEED LOTS OF HELP
AND FRIENDS

CHRISTMAS PHRASE

LOVE IS PLENTIFUL
THIS YOU KNOW
LET IT FALL ON US
LIKE THE SNOW

BE KIND BE GENTLE
GOD LOVES US ALL
HAPPY HOLIDAYS
ONE AND ALL

LONELY BOY

JOKES HELP LONELY PEOPLE
THE WORLD DOESN'T SEEM SO BAD
HUMOUR JUST EASES PAIN
YOUTH NEEDS IT TO FORGET THE SAD

KIND PEOPLE GOOD TO KNOW
KILLING BOREDOM OF LIFE
NO ONE UNDERSTANDS
JOKES GOD'S SALVE ON LIFE

NO ONE YOUTH'S LOVER
GOD HAS SEEN TO THAT
JOKES PREVENT CLOSENESS
HOPE TO REMEDY THAT

HOPE GOD HAS A PLAN
HOPE PEOPLE KIND TO KNOW
BOTHERED BY IT GREATLY
LOOKING TO FIND OUT HOW

JOKES KID YOU

NOBODY DOES A JOKE LIKE SAL.
GADS IS SHE FUNNY.
GOOD HUMOURED OR WHAT?
EVERYDAY
SHE IS HAPPY

I LOVE HER LAUGH
NOBODY ENJOYS IT
LIKE I DO.
JUST REMEMBERING HER
LAUGH
MAKES ME SMILE.

TEACHING IS ROUGH,
I KNOW, I'VE DONE IT.
HER PERSONALITY GIVES
EVERYONE A LIFT.

CLOUDS

THE PERFECT PEARLY CLOUDS
GLIDE OVER THE PATCHWORK
NONSENSICAL LAND.

THEY SEEM TO YOUNG PEOPLE
LIKE PILLOWS.

TO OLD PEOPLE THEY BRING
HAPPINESS LIKE THE
IDYLLIC SUN.

TALK

HOW I ONLY WANT TO TALK
GOD GRANT ME THAT DREAM
YOUTH NEEDS TO WONDER
WHY HIM?
UNUSUAL ROW TO HOE
IT SEEMS

UNDERSTAND THE SILENCE
ROARS IN MY HEAD
TOO ROTTEN YOUTH SAID
PERHAPS IT WILL END

IN MY MIND

I TRY TO PRETEND I'M
NORMAL AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE
IN MY MIND

I TRY TO GO TO
TEACHING
IN MY MIND

TRY MY BEST
IN MY MIND

GO FOR MY LICENSE
IN MY MIND

GET MARRIED
IN MY MIND

HOPE MY DREAMS CAN
COME TRUE

A VALENTINE'S PHRASE

LOVE IS THE REASON
WE DO EVERYTHING
KEEPS US TOGETHER
MAKES OUR HEARTS SING

LYRICAL ILLOGICAL POEM

UP OVER THE YOUTHFUL LITTLE PEOPLE
GO THE PUFFY PUFFY
SOARING SWOLLEN DOVE-LIKE CLOUDS
TOSSING RAISED LOOKS AT EVERY
OAT AND YOUNG REED
JOKING WITH THE SUN,
LAUGHING AT THE OMINOUS JEALOUS NIGHT
UP UP IN THE HEAVENS
IS THE PLACE FOR PERFECTION

FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

TOSSING ME
IN THE AIR
GOD
PALED

HE FORGOT
PEOPLE LAND
HEAD FIRST

THERE I WAS
HOMEWARD BOUND
GOD
SIGHED

THE WORRIED WORLD

TEASE DAVID WORLD
DAVID KNOWS THOUGH
FAT CHANCE AT JOBS
REALLY SAD, SAD WORLD

TEASE DAVID WORLD
DAVID SOARS ABOVE IT
DAVID SOARS AT
PEOPLE WHO DON'T CARE

J.P. LOONEY

J P LOONEY IS MY NAME
GOING SLOWLY CRAZY
IS THE GAME
DANCING FLAPPING ALL
AROUND
EARLY RISER, I ABOUND
ROARING, SCREAMING
SEE ME FLY
PAL, FRIEND, CATCH MY
LIE
TOO SLAPDASH FOR A MALE
FOREIGN SOUNDING
JOSEPH FAIL
EARLY RISER
COLLIC PERSON
JOSEPH LANDING ON
A CUSHION
YOUTHFUL CRAZY
GOING WORKING
DON'T HIRE ME

HOPE

YOU FORGET HOPE.
IT IS EASY
BUT ONLY HOPE WILL SET YOU FREE.
YOU HAVE TO HOPE FOR THE BEST,
PREPARE FOR THE WORST
AND PERHAPS PACE YOURSELF
TO ACCEPT EITHER ONE.

THERE IS NOT MUCH HOPE
FOR AUTISM RIGHT NOW.
WHEN THEY FIND A CURE
I WILL PERHAPS BE OLD.
YOUTH REALLY PAVES THE WAY
FOR OLD AGE
AND THE PAVEMENT WILL BE SET.

JUST THINK
HOW TERRIBLE OLD AGE WILL BE
ON THE PARENTS
OF THE CHILDREN.
DO YOU THINK HELP
WILL ARRIVE IN TIME?